



## **CHESTERFIELD COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Department:** Human Resource Management  
**Subject:** Employee Assistance Program

**Policy Number:** 6-22  
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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Chesterfield County recognizes that there are times when personal problems may affect an employee's well-being and job performance. For this reason, a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been sponsored and paid for by the County and is available to all employees and their immediate families and members of their household at no charge.

This program provides professional and confidential assistance for a broad range of personal concerns. Typical problems that can be addressed through the EAP include stress, marital and family problems, psychological and financial problems, personal legal situations and problems related to alcohol and drug abuse.

Chesterfield County has contracted with a private consulting and service firm to administer the program.

All counseling through the EAP is on a voluntary basis even if recommended to the employee by management, except in the event of a mandatory referral as defined in section II-C-1. Participation in counseling does not relieve the employee of responsibility to achieve departmental expectations regarding performance, conduct and attendance.

The Department of Human Resource Management (HRM) is available to clarify issues relating to the use of the EAP, the referral process and coordination of benefits.

### **II. PROCEDURES**

To ensure that necessary confidential assistance is provided to an employee and/or immediate family, the following steps should be taken:

#### **A. Self-Referral**

The employee or any member of their household can call the Employee Assistance Program to schedule an appointment with a representative.

The EAP will arrange an appointment for the individual with a local Employee assistance Program counselor. The EAP also offers emergency assistance on a 24-hour basis.

#### **B. Management Referrals**

1. Management referral to the Employee Assistance Program is based on:

- a. A request by the employee for assistance with a personal problem
- b. A pattern of decline in an employee's work performance
- c. A particular on-the-job incident that indicates the possible presence of a personal problem

The EAP is available to discuss situations with managers and advise them on when a management referral is appropriate and the appropriate steps for making the referral.

2. When an employee seeks advice regarding a personal problem, it is the responsibility of the manager or supervisor to suggest the employee use the professional counseling services that are available through the EAP and offer to assist the employee in arranging for an appointment with the EAP Counselor.

3. When an employee's performance is the basis for a referral to the EAP, the manager should prepare a written account of the performance problem that has been observed. This information should also be included in any discussions with the employee which are intended to provide feedback under the Employee Development Program. This account should be as detailed as possible including the dates, times, and description of the behavior that has become a part of a pattern of decline, or a particular incident that warrants managerial action. This documentation is for the supervisor's use in talking with the employee.
4. If an EAP referral occurs, based on the above information, the manager should call the EAP and ask to speak with a counselor for assistance in making a management referral. The counselor will review the performance problem with the supervisor or manager and assist in preparing for a meeting with the employee.
5. The manager or supervisor should then have a meeting with the employee to discuss the performance problem and communicate as clearly as possible the consequences of failure to resolve the problem. This meeting should focus solely on defining the work performance and/or attendance problems—not on any personal difficulties.
6. After the employee has been confronted with the performance problem, the manager or supervisor should review the EAP policy with the employee, advise him of the availability of confidential, professional assistance for any work-hampering personal problems, and strongly encourage the employee to allow the manager or supervisor to arrange an appointment with an Employee Assistance Counselor. Although the final decision to use the program is made by the employee, management should emphasize the advantages of the Employee Assistance Program.
7. If the employee agrees to accept assistance, the manager or supervisor should arrange a meeting between the employee and the EAP counselor.
8. If a signed release of information form is obtained, the manager making the referral will be informed whether the employee is working toward a plan to resolve the personal situation and if he or she is keeping appointments.
9. In accordance with Section IV (B) of the County's Alcohol and Substance Policy, the EAP will be required to notify the Police and Fire Department, Emergency Communications and Sheriff's Office respectively when sworn employees of the Police Department and Sheriff's Office and uniformed employees of the Fire Department and Emergency Communications voluntarily seek services of the EAP and are found to:
  - a. Be using controlled substances.
  - b. To have abused, illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs in a manner that could affect current or future job performance. The notification will only take place once the employee has signed the release form, the counselor has completed assessment of the problem, and developed a treatment plan. Once notified the department will take appropriate action pursuant to County policies.
10. An employee may choose to decline assistance through the EAP. Participation in the EAP is voluntary, except in the event of a mandatory referral made in accordance with section II.C.1. However, whether the employee declines or accepts the offer of help through the EAP, he retains his responsibility to meet accepted job performance, conduct and attendance expectations.

**C. Mandatory Referrals**

1. Mandatory referrals to the EAP may be made in the following situations:
  - a. When an employee tests positive on a breath alcohol test or drug screen or is determined to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs

- b. When a fitness for duty evaluation includes the recommendation of an EAP or similar referral
    - c. When the employee has been involved in workplace violence as defined in Administrative Procedure 6-23, Workplace Violence
    - d. When departmental management is concerned that the employee's behavior creates a threat to the employee or others
  - 2. All mandatory referrals will be coordinated by HRM by having the department director/office administrator or designee contact HRM and provide information on the circumstances. The HRM representative will evaluate the information and if the criteria are met, will contact the EAP representative to initiate the process. Mandatory referrals should not be directed to the main EAP phone number. In the case of a mandatory referral, an employee who declines assistance from the EAP or who fails to follow the recommended treatment program will be disciplined up to and including termination.
  - 3. The EAP counselor will assist by:
    - a. Gathering appropriate information and setting an appointment for a clinical assessment of the employee's problem
    - b. Formulating a treatment recommendation
    - c. Providing information, assessment, counseling services and/or professional referral when appropriate
    - d. Reporting back to the supervisor whether or not the employee kept the appointment and whether the employee is compliant with the treatment recommendation
    - e. Coordinating return to duty testing with the supervisor and HRM and following up with the supervisor on whether or not the employee continues to comply with the treatment recommendation
  - 4. Following the EAP assessment and/or professional referral, the EAP counselor will assist the employee as follows:
    - a. In the event that consultation and/or counseling is provided by the EAP counselor, the EAP counselor will report back to the designated person whether the employee has substantially completed the treatment recommendation
    - b. If referral outside EAP is indicated, the EAP counselor will report the employee's compliance with and completion of said referral
    - c. By referring the employee to the appropriate medical personnel to obtain fitness for duty certification
- D. **Time Off for Counseling** – Any time off from work to attend counseling for oneself or family members is treated the same as other absences due to medical appointments. A supervisor may approve use of either accumulated sick leave or annual leave, as available and appropriate.
- E. **Family Member Assistance**
- 1. Any member of an employee's immediate family (benefit eligible dependents and household members) also may use the Employee Assistance Program.
  - 2. The Employee Assistance Program counselor will arrange a confidential consultation for the individual.
  - 3. Any communication between the individual and the counselor will be held in strictest confidence except when disclosure of use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol and prescription drugs is required as outlined in Section II, B (9) of this policy.

- F. **Management Consultation** – Chesterfield County managers and supervisors may contact the EAP for consultation on addressing job performance problems at any time.
- G. **Cost of the Program** – The EAP is a benefit provided at no charge to employees by the County for all employees and their families. If a situation requires the EAP counselor to refer an employee to external professional resources, the fees for these follow-up appointments will be the responsibility of the employee and must be coordinated with their health care coverage.